



The Pelvic Floor: How Can Exercise Help?

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A photograph of an elderly woman with short, wavy grey hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. She is sitting on a light-colored sofa, looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. Her hands are clasped together, and she is holding a pair of glasses. In the background, there is a wooden coffee table and a lamp. A solid blue vertical bar is located in the top right corner of the image.

**There Are
Things We
Assume Are
Normal As
We Get Older**

**Loss of
Bladder
Control Is
Not One!**



The Pelvic Floor

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone and this or any other exercise program may result in injury. PLEASE consult your DOCTOR before beginning this or any other exercise program, especially if you have any chronic or recurring condition.



Anatomy



Function



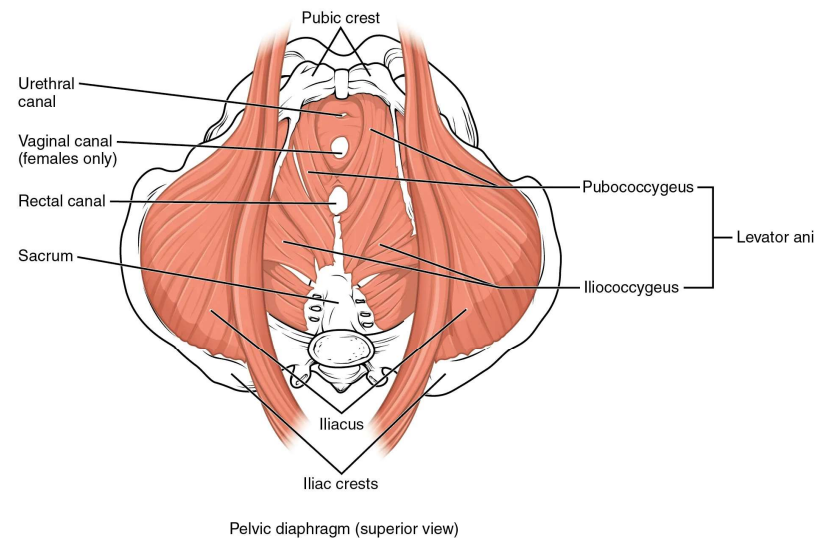
Common Conditions



Exercises

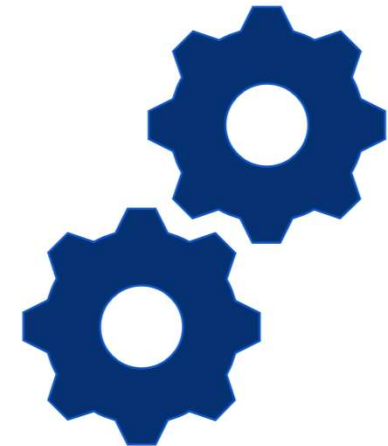
Anatomy

- ▶ A Muscular Sheet In The Bottom Part Of The Pelvic Cavity
- ▶ Consists Of:
 - ▶ Muscles, Fascia And Ligaments
- ▶ Pelvic Floor Muscles Are Considered Voluntary



Function

- ▶ Support The Pelvic Organs
- ▶ Prevent Urinary Or Fecal Leakage
- ▶ Facilitate Emptying Of The Bladder And Rectum
- ▶ Enable Sexual Function



Common Conditions

- ▶ Urinary Incontinence
 - ▶ Stress
 - ▶ Urge
 - ▶ Overflow
 - ▶ Neurogenic
- ▶ Pelvic Organ Prolapse
- ▶ Fecal Incontinence



Symptoms of Pelvic Floor Conditions

- ▶ Symptoms May Vary Based On Specific Condition
- ▶ Women May Experience:
 - ▶ Seeing Or Feeling A “Bulge” Or “Something Coming Out” Of The Vagina
 - ▶ Have Difficulty Starting To Urinate Or Emptying The Bladder Completely
 - ▶ Leak Urine When Coughing, Laughing, Or Exercising
 - ▶ Feel An Urgent Or Frequent Need To Urinate
 - ▶ Have Difficulty Making It To The Bathroom In Time



How Can Exercise Help?

- ▶ Increase Conscious Control Of Pelvic Floor Muscles
- ▶ Strengthen Muscles To Support Bladder
- ▶ Improve Endurance To Maintain Control Of Voluntary Urine Flow
- ▶ Learning To Relax The Muscles Can Be As Important As Contracting Them!



Activating The Pelvic Floor Muscles



1. Lay On The Floor/Bed In A Comfortable Position
2. Focus On Steady Breathing And Relaxing All Muscles
3. Replicate The Feeling Of Holding In Your Urine Then Relax
4. Replicate The Feeling Of Holding In Gas

Avoid Using Your Stomach, Legs Or Buttocks During This Exercise

“Kegel” Exercise



1. Slowly Contract Your Pelvic Floor Muscle For 5 Seconds
2. Slowly And Completely Relax The Muscles For 5 Seconds
3. Repeat As Needed
4. Ensure You Are Slowly Breathing Throughout The Exercise

Elevator Imagery

- ▶ “Imagine An Elevator, Slowly Going From The Bottom Floor,
- ▶ To The Middle,
- ▶ To The Top,
- ▶ Then Slowly Back To The Bottom”



Pelvic Clock

- ▶ Lie On Your Back In A Relaxed Position With Your Knees Bent And Your Feet Flat On The Ground Approximately Pelvis Width Apart.
- ▶ Next, Imagine A Clock On Your Stomach/Pelvis Area. Tilt Your Pelvis So That The Clock Tips Towards 12 O'clock (Posterior Tilt) And Your Low Back Presses Firmly Against The Floor.
- ▶ Then Reverse The Direction And Tilt Your Pelvis So That The Imaginary Clock Tilts Towards 6 O'clock (Anterior Tilt) And The Pressure Of Your Low Back Is Taken Off The Floor. There May Be A Some Space Under Your Low Back At The End Range Of This Position.
- ▶ Have Your Thumbs Placed On The Front Of Your Pelvic Bone (Asis) So You Can Feel The Movement. During The Movement Your Pelvis Rolls Forward (Anterior Tilt) And Back (Posterior Tilt).
- ▶ Repeat This With Smooth Controlled Motions.



Transverse Abdominal Training

- ▶ Press Your Finger Tips Into Your Relaxed Abdomen Lateral Of Your Navel. Next, Tighten And Brace Your Abdomen So That The Muscles Push Your Finger Tips Away From The Center Of Your Body. Hold And Then Relax And Repeat.



History Of Exercise Recommendations

Table 2. Description of different design of exercise protocol

Study	Exercise protocol
Jones, 1963 ²⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFMC 3 seconds hold, 3 second rest • Sets: 10 times each half an hour • PFMC 3 seconds hold, 3 second rest Shut off the urine flow during every voiding
Castleden, 1984 ⁵¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFMC 4 or 5 every hours • 2 weeks of perineometer training • Orientation to interruption of micturition every day
Wilson, 1987 ⁵²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFMC 5 seconds hold, 15 seconds rest • Sets: 3 per day
Henalla et al., 1989 ²⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PFMC, with 5 seconds hold • Set per hour: 1 • About 80 VPFMC per day during 12 weeks • Weekly clinic visit
Hofbauer et al., 1990 ²⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise program including PFMC, abdominal and hip adductor exercise • Twice a week for 20 minutes with therapist, and daily home program
Burns et al., 1993 ³¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 PFMC with 3 second hold, and 10 PFMC with 10 second hold • Progressed by 10 per set to daily maximum of 200 • Sets per day: 4 • Videotape describing exercise protocol
Wilson et al., 1995 ⁵²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 alternation fast (1 seconds) and slow (5 seconds) contractions daily
Bo et al., 1999 ⁴¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 to 12 high intensity (close to maximal) VPFMC, with 6 to 8 second hold and 3 to 4 fast contractions added at the end of each hold, 6 second rest between contractions • Sets per day: 3 • Body position: included lying, kneeling, sitting, standing; all with legs apart; subject to use preferred position • Audiotape of home training program • Weekly 45 minute exercise class to music, with PFMC in a variety of body positions, and back, abdominal, buttock and thigh muscle exercises
Aksac et al., 2003 ⁵⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 VPFMC, with 5 seconds hold and 10 second rest • Progressing at 2 weeks to 10 seconds hold and 20 second rest • Sets per day: 3
Yonn et al., 2003 ²⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFMC for strength and endurance, taking 15 to 20 minutes per day • Strength: burst of intense activity lasting a few seconds • Endurance: 6 second holds progressed by 1 second per week to 12 second • Set per day: not stated
Borello-France et al., 2008 ²⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFMC: 3 sets of 20 contractions (3 seconds hold) and 3 sets of 10 contractions (12 seconds hold) per session, twice a day

PFMC = pelvic floor muscle contraction; VPFMC = voluntary pelvic floor muscle contractions.

Before Getting Started...

- ▶ I Recommend You See A Pelvic Floor Physiotherapist
- ▶ It Can Be Helpful To Find Out Exactly Which Concern You Are Suffering From
- ▶ They Can Help Design A Program Tailored To You



Want Additional Support?

- ▶ Book A Virtual Appointment With Me!
 - ▶ 1 Hour One On One For Initial Session
- ▶ A Kinesiologist Can Help You Use Exercise For:
 - ▶ Chronic Diseases And Injuries
 - ▶ Arthritis
 - ▶ Low Back Pain
 - ▶ Tendonitis And Bursitis
 - ▶ Falls Prevention
 - ▶ Performance
 - ▶ Improving Health And Independence



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